

The Daily Charge



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"Telling the MND-Baghdad Story"

Tuesday, August 14, 2007



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2-82 Airborne Div. Public Affairs)

St. Louis native Sgt. Aaron Johnson, a psychological operations sergeant attached to the Fort Stewart, Ga. based 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, talks to a local Adhamiyah man across from the street from the Abu Hanifa Mosque Aug. 8. Johnson was trying to get a better sense of the mood of the community after residents rose up and ousted terrorists from the mosque Aug. 5.

Iraqi, U.S. Forces Build on Citizens Momentum

By Sgt. Mike Pryor
2-82 Abn. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers operating in the Adhamiyah District of the Iraqi capital used to wager bets on what kind of attack they would come under when patrolling near the Abu Hanifa Mosque.

"We'd be like, I wonder what we'll get hit with today?" said Maj. Jim Schaffer of Cleveland, Ohio, a civil affairs team leader who has been based in Adhamiyah since

February.

Small arms fire, rocket-propelled grenades and roadside bombs struck patrols traveling near the mosque on such a regular basis that Schaffer and the other Soldiers were convinced insurgents had made the Abu Hanifa their base.

But when the mosque was finally raided and the terrorists thrown out, it wasn't Coalition Forces or Iraqi Soldiers who did it. It was the residents of Adhamiyah.

On Aug. 5, a group of citizens, fed-up

with terrorist activity in their community, stormed the Abu Hanifa Mosque and expelled the insurgents, beginning a chain of events that led coalition forces to detain more than 50 suspected terrorists and seize five large weapons caches over the next two days.

The surprising turn of events was welcome news for coalition forces in the area.

"I think (the people) were just saying,

see **Momentum** page 3

Ministry of Oil Replaces Destroyed Fuel Pumps

**By 1st Lt. Ray Ashworth
1-64 Armor Regiment**

BAGHDAD — The Iraqi Ministry of Oil rebuilt an essential benzene pump station in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Khadra.

On July 10, an engine spark ignited a puddle of spilled benzene next to one of the pumps at the station. An explosion ensued, resulting in seven civilian deaths and all 10 benzene pumps being destroyed.

"It was very bad," said Famir Abus, one of three managers at the benzene station. "But the Ministry of Oil gave us the money we needed to replace the pumps five days after the accident."

The Ministry of Oil provided the money for new pumps and paid contractors to fix the wiring for those pumps to help prevent any future accidents from occurring.

"Government workers worked every day to make sure the benzene station was open as soon as possible," remarked Muhammad Sigheed, another station manager.

Muhammad was quick to show that all 10 pumps were not only replaced, but the Iraqi government provided money to purchase four new pumps, as well.

With government help, the Khadra ben-

zene station opened 16 days after the accident. Now it has a larger fuel capacity and is better able to serve the citizens of Khadra. There is a constant stream of vehicles flowing through its gates with 15 employees on hand providing the customers with full service.

An added feature to the station since its reopening is the presence of Iraqi National Police officers from 2nd Battalion, 5th Regiment, 2nd National Police Division. Two police trucks guard both the entrance and exit points, and police officers patrol the

line and inspect the would-be customers.

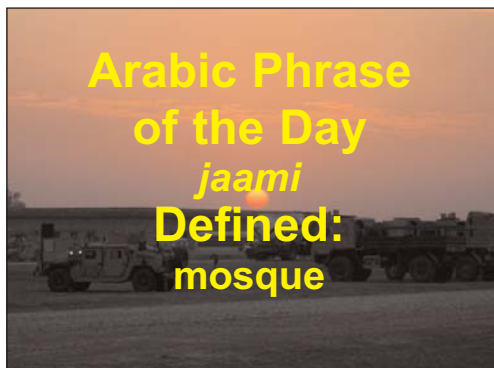
"A few months ago, terrorists would come in and steal benzene, and there was no one to stop them," said Muhammad Sigheed. "But the National Police protect the station while we're open."

"The Khadra benzene station is very important to the city," said the local National Police commanding officer, Lt. Colonel Hassan. "With benzene, our citizens can drive to work and provide generators with fuel for electricity. So, it is part of our service to Khadra to help keep this station open."



(Photo by 1st Lt. Ray Ashworth, 1-64 Armor Regiment)

An accidental fire destroyed the benzene station in Khadra July 10. The Iraqi Ministry of Oil provided funds to repair the gas station, as well as supplied Iraqi National Police officers to guard the station during its hours of business.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 114
Low: 85



Tomorrow

High: 115
Low: 85



Thursday

High: 116
Low: 86

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Iraqi, U.S. Forces in Adhamiyah Try to Build off Residents' Stand Against Terrorism

Momentum

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enough is enough," said Fort Knox, Ky., native Lt. Col. Jeff Broadwater, commander of the Fort Stewart, Ga.-based 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment "Sabers," the U.S. unit responsible for security in Adhamiyah.

"I think it was a tipping point," Broadwater said.

The challenge for Coalition Forces now is to capitalize on the situation, and not let the momentum created by the uprising go to waste, Broadwater said.

"The most important thing for us now is that we build more than we destroy. All of our offensive operations have to be balanced by (humanitarian efforts)," said Maj. Ike Sallee, the squadron's operations officer.

The Sabers took over responsibility for Adhamiyah just last month. Yet the unit has already approved almost \$500,000 in development projects. Some of those currently underway include micro-loans for economic revitalization, sewage and trash removal, the employment of a local security force for a hospital, and numerous school rehabilitation projects, said 1st Lt. Chadwick Knight, the squadron's targeting officer.

But the Soldiers also realize their resources are limited.

"We're doing what we can, but we can't do it ourselves," Broadwater said. "The government of Iraq has to come in."

To that end, the Sabers



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2-82 Airborne Div. Public Affairs)

Lamirada, Calif., native Pfc. Josh Nelson (right), of the Fort Stewart, Ga.-based 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, shares a laugh with a local man while out on patrol near the Abu Hanifa Mosque in Baghdad's Adhamiyah District Aug. 8.

have been focusing on strengthening their relationships with local leaders and government officials, such as members of the Neighborhood and District Advisory Councils.

For the Sabers, local government issues are as crucial to mission success as military operations, and are treated with equal importance. On one recent afternoon, sniper fire in the Antar Square area made it unsafe for some of the staff at the DAC to walk home from their office. Soldiers from Troop C came to their rescue, providing a dismounted escort and leading the frightened group of men, women, and children through the square safely.

"Actions speak louder than

words, and doing this stuff shows the people 'we care more about you than you think we do,'" Sallee said.

In the past, Coalition Forces have struggled to get that message out, and there is still a lot of distrust among the people of Adhamiyah towards the U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers. It's something that Sabers know won't change overnight, Sallee said.

But the Sabers hope the mosque uprising may be an indication that opinion in the community has begun to shift in their favor.

Reaction to the uprising at the mosque was mixed. Some of the men said the weapons that had been discovered in the mosque had been planted there

by Iraqi Soldiers. Others were happy that the mosque had been liberated from terrorists, but wanted to talk about other problems like the lack of electricity.

But other residents seemed emboldened by the news. Hajji Kasem, a local businessman, said he was glad the terrorists were out of the mosque, and he had plans to organize a neighborhood watch to keep them out. He said he was happy to work with Coalition Forces, even though some of his friends would question the relationship.

"They say, why do you work with these guys? But I just want Adhamiyah to get better," Kasem said. "All I care about is helping my people."

Iraqi General's Son Follows Father's Footsteps

By Staff Sgt. W. Wayne Marlow
2-2 Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – The son and nephew of an Iraqi general got a first-hand look at how the U.S. Army does business during a sojourn at Forward Operating Base Loyalty this week.

Mohammed Reyad, son of the 9th Iraqi Army Division commander Jalal Reyad, and a cadet at the Baghdad Military Academy, visited 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Soldiers to learn more about Army techniques and to strengthen the ties between the two countries. Joining him was his cousin, Haydar Sibeh, a specialist in the Iraqi Army.

Reyad had nothing but kind words for the U.S. Soldiers he trained with. "It was very useful and positive," he said. "We learned about leadership in general and how the lieutenants run their platoons and deal with Soldiers and their concerns."

He will take what he learned and pass it onto fellow cadets.

"I will integrate what I learned here into my training schedule," Reyad said. "Some of the skills I learned will be landmarks to guide me through my training."

Sibeh will do the same with Soldiers in his unit.

"I will carry this experience to my Soldiers. I want them to get to U.S. Soldier standards on tasks like vehicle and weapons maintenance," he said. "I was very impressed with the way American Soldiers train."

Reyad also praised the work ethic of his U.S. counterparts and he hopes the Iraqi Military Academy and the Iraqi Army can return to what he calls their glory days.

"I had multiple reasons for joining

the Iraqi Army," he said. "The military has always been my passion and I want to see the Army restored. I like the military lifestyle and take pride in my own Army. My father was a mentor in all things, and he was one of the main reasons I joined."

As the Iraqi Army grows in numbers and ability, Reyad is looking forward to the day when it can reclaim its country.

"I would like to rescue my country from the gangs of terrorists," he said. "The country needs its sons to stand with it, and make sure its children, women, and old men are safe."

Sibeh added that he plans on making the military a career.

"I am very proud to serve in Iraq," he

said.

In between learning about maintenance and firing at an electronic range, the two had time to view *Saving Private Ryan*. Both reported being impacted deeply by the movie.

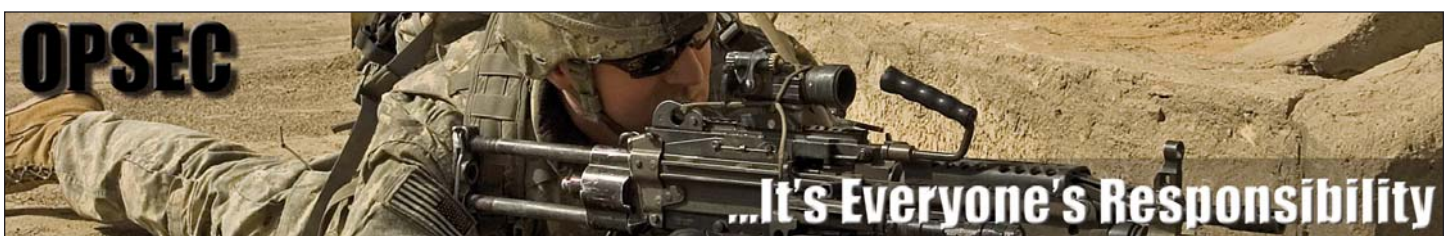
"I was reminded of the suffering of my own people when I saw the lady who lost her three sons," Reyad said. "We have a deep wound that we must tend to with the help of our American friends."

For Sibeh, the movie reminded him of the aftermath of an explosion on Karadah, where he helped pull survivors from the rubble. He said seeing the damage and suffering caused by terrorists strengthened his resolve to continue the fight.



(U.S. Army photo)

Mohammed Reyad (left) and Iraqi Army Spc. Haydar Sibeh (center) tackle the electronic firing range at Forward Operating Base Loyalty in eastern Baghdad during training with Soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Reyad and Sibeh are the son and nephew, respectively, of the 9th Iraqi Army Division commander, Maj. Gen. Jalel Reyad.



Separating Friend from Foe in Saba Al Bor

By Spc. L.B. Edgar,
7th MPAD

BAGHDAD – The young Iraqi girl looked up to her mother in search of the right answer to the question: “Is this a bad man?” Apprehension shaded her innocent, cherubic face. Hesitantly, she responded with a meek, “Laa.” No.

Immediately, a seasoned female interpreter recognized the child’s reluctance as fear. The truth: the man in question was certainly suspect, if not criminal. The eyes of a young child seldom lie.

In the girl’s neighborhood within Saba Al Bor, mixed signals are common. Residents of the predominantly Shiite area of the town in the northern Baghdad Province, live in constant fear of militia extremists.

However, things are better than before. Sectarian violence is down, there is an increased presence on the streets, and most importantly, citizens of Saba Al Bor, located on the outskirts of Iraq’s capital, are taking responsibility for their own security, said Swansea, S.C., native, Capt. Brooks Yarborough.

“The biggest help from the citizens of Saba Al Bor is their hospitality and willingness to cooperate with Coalition Forces. Every door we knock on, every child we see, there is always a smiling face greeting us,” said the 25-year-old fire support officer for 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment.

Already suspected of ties to Jaish Al Mahdi (JAM), a Shiite extremist group operating in Saba Al Bor as well as greater Baghdad, the man was questioned. When his story did not quite add up, neighbors weighed in about why they feared the



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th MPAD)

Killeen, Texas, native Sgt. Nicholas Anderson, 24, the Estonian liaison for Troop B, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, takes a breather along with an Estonian soldier as a boy looks on in Saba Al Bor, a town on the northern outskirts of Baghdad Province, during a search of a predominantly Shia neighborhood Aug. 7.

rotund Iraqi.

“The suspect claimed to merely be a butcher, rather than a member in Mahdi’s Army,” said Killeen, Texas, native Sgt. Nicholas Anderson.

The bulk of the information leading to questioning the man came from a seemingly unlikely source, a concerned citizen of Saba Al Bor, who actively works with Coalition Forces to secure his town.

Though the concerned citizen’s true name is uncertain, he prefers to be called “Colonel Muhammad,” saying he was once an officer in Saddam’s Army. Although a Sunni, he also works with Shia in Saba Al Bor.

“His primary concern is bringing criminals, across sectarian lines, to justice and in the process restoring the once populous town’s prosperity,” said

Anderson, 24, who works with him regularly in Saba Al Bor.

Colonel Muhammad’s other alias, “volunteer six,” denotes his assumed position as the commander of the volunteers, concerned citizens who actively assist Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces root out insurgents and extremists alike by providing useful information.

The information du jour is the butcher suspected of ties to the Jaish Al Mahdi. Col Muhammad spoke with residents who relayed their concerns; sometimes directly and in other cases non-verbally, such as the young girl.

“The people are scared of him,” the clean-cut, middle-aged Col. Muhammad told Anderson, a liaison with the Estonian platoon. In turn, Anderson shared the tip with the Estonian soldiers. Other residents were consulted and their

responses coupled with the child’s reluctance to answer compelled a line of questioning.

When the suspect was uncooperative during questioning he became a visitor of the nearby joint security station, another improvement to security in Saba Al Bor.

“The people of Saba Al Bor are really pleased with the Coalition presence here, to include the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police,” explained Yarborough.

“The only way you’re going to catch these people is to make relationships with the people,” Anderson said.

One little girl may not have verbally given Coalition forces an honest answer, but her eyes told no lies. She feared her next-door neighbor, who was taken away by the Soldiers who searched and secured her neighborhood.